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MILITARY STRATEGY VERSUS DIPLOMACY

IN BISMARCK'S TIME AND AFTERWARDS

BY

MUNROE SMITH

PROFESSOR OF JURISPRUDENCE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
DOCTOR OF LAWS, COLUMBIA, GÖTTINGEN AND LOUVAIN UNIVERSITIES

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IN BISMARCK'S TIME AND AFTERWARD[1]

IT is the purpose of this paper to compare the conduct of Austro-German diplomacy before the outbreak of the present war with that of Prussian and German diplomacy in the Bismarckian period; and, in so far as the more recent diplomacy appears to have been less successful than the earlier, to indicate what seems to have been one of the principal obstacles to its success.

It would be a grateful as well as an easy task to treat this subject from an idealistic and humanitarian point of view, and to assume that it is the duty of governments to render war impossible. Such a discussion, however, would leave us where we started, in a world not yet realized. War persistently recurs, and in certain contingencies it seems to be unavoidable. In the existing world-order the first duty of the statesman is to protect the interests of his own country, and his action is to be judged, neither by pacificist nor militarist theories, but according to the standards of approved political practice.

I shall hardly be accused of adopting a utopian standard for the conduct of international politics if I base my criticism mainly on the practice and doctrines of Prince Bismarck. Some modern German writers have remarked that the more pacific theories of this statesman, formulated for the most part after 1871, are not in harmony with his foreign policy before that time. If, however, we note certain distinctions upon which he himself insisted, his practice and his doctrines do not appear to be inconsistent.

I

Bismarck held that a state may rightly make war for the realization or defense of vital national interests, but that it should

[1] The substance of this paper was presented to the Phi Beta Kappa Society of New York, December 14, 1914, and to the Century Association of New York, February 13, 1915.

not make war solely to increase its power, much less to preserve or augment its prestige. The wars which Prussia waged under Bismarck's political guidance, particularly the war against Austria in 1866, unquestionably increased Prussia's power, but he invariably defended these wars on the ground that they were necessary for the establishment of German national unity. In his memoirs he tells us that in 1863 the Emperor Alexander II of Russia proposed to Prussia an offensive alliance against Austria, and that he advised against the acceptance of this offer. He explains that, if the alliance had been accepted,

> we should, in such case, have waged a Prussian war of conquest, but the sinews of Prussia's national policy would have been cut. In the effort to give to the German nation, through unity, the possibility of an existence corresponding to its historical importance lay the weightiest argument for justifying the German "fratricidal war." If the struggle between the German peoples had been resolved upon solely in the interest of strengthening the separate state of Prussia, the renewal of such a war would have been inevitable.[1]

In Bismarck's speeches and writings he frequently distinguishes between a policy that aims to realize or defend national interests (*Interessenpolitik*) and one which aims at power (*Machtpolitik*), and he consistently employs the latter term as one of censure. "Working for prestige" (*auf Prestige wirtschaften*) is a phrase which he often uses, and which carries a still stronger note of censure.[2]

[1] Gedanken und Erinnerungen (one-volume edition), p. 419; Bismarck, The Man and the Statesman, vol. ii, pp. 76, 77. In following notes the German version of this work is cited as "Memoirs" and the English as "translation." The translations in this paper are by the writer.

[2] What Bismarck would have thought of the promotion of *Kultur* as a justification of any policy may perhaps be inferred from his protest against calling the internal struggle between Prussia and the Roman Catholic Church a *Kulturkampf*. "We are not contending," he said, "for *Kultur*, but for the political interests of Prussia and Germany."

French as well as English writers have abandoned the effort to find an equivalent for *Kultur*. The word is of course broader than our "culture," but not identical in meaning with our "civilization." The German philosopher, Eucken, throws some light on the difference. He declares that our civilization is "external" and rests on "subjugation to forms." This, he maintains, should be complemented by an "internal" civilization which springs from the spirit. Granting both the truth and the

Even if a war seems adapted to promote national interests, the statesman must of course consider the importance of the interests to be subserved and the chances of victory. In modern European conditions the latter question is not to be answered by considering solely the military strength and economic resources of the single country and of its immediate adversary; there must be consideration also of alliances and of neutralities. It is here that the special task of diplomacy begins. It is the business of the diplomatist to make sure that his country shall not be brought into conflict with a coalition of superior power. In the condition of latent war in which Europe has been living for centuries, the problem of alliances is a perpetual one. In the continuous peril of open war in which Europe has lived during the last half-century, this problem is of special importance. Alliances are arranged in advance, and for terms of years, even when war is not in sight. When war is in sight, the diplomatist has to assure himself that his allies will recognize their treaty obligations; he has to detach, if possible, the enemy's allies from active support of the hostile cause; and he must seek to gain the moral if not the material support of probably neutral states. He must make sure, at all events, that none of these probably neutral states shall join forces with the enemy. If he cannot achieve these results, if he is not reasonably assured that superior or at least equal force will be on his side—and on this point he is not justified in hoping or guessing—it is his clear duty, at any sacrifice except that of the national honor, to strive to avert the war or at least to postpone it as long as possible. And he must not confuse with true honor the sham honor known as prestige. The line of distinction is undoubtedly a narrow one, but he must strive to observe it. It was this line that Thiers tried to draw when, on July 15, 1870, he told the French ministry and his fellow deputies that France was going to war "on a question of sensitiveness."

nobility of this doctrine, it may be pointed out that it lends itself easily to dangerous misconstruction and misapplication. In the average mind a conviction of the superiority of spirit over form may beget an undervaluation of forms that have an ethical content of the highest value; and such undervaluation may lead to disregard. This peril is inherent in every system of individualistic or specifically national morality, because individual or national interest is apt to produce conviction of right.

The diplomatist has also to see to it that his country shall not appear to be responsible for the outbreak of war. In spite of the periodical recurrence of war throughout human history, and in spite of the fact that war brings out, with some of the basest traits of human nature, also many of the noblest, the great majority of civilized human beings regard it as abnormal and evil. In some cases it may be regarded as a necessary evil, or as the lesser or least of two or more threatened evils, but it is not generally recognized as good in itself. There has indeed always been an opposite theory; eloquent voices have always been raised in praise of war; but in modern times at least such praise finds no general echo even in periods of peace, and when war comes its laudation excites resentment.

In the common opinion, responsibility for war attaches primarily to the aggressor. An aggressive war may be justifiable, but the burden of proof is on the aggressor. The most obvious justification of aggressive war is to be found in the adversary's breach of a treaty. No nation can be bound perpetually by a treaty that contravenes its interests; but if the treaty secures important interests of the other contracting party, its repudiation gives the latter a formal right to declare war. And it is not regarded as correct practice to denounce a treaty without previous negotiation, much less to break a treaty by aggressive military action. It is hardly too much to say that this latter course is generally regarded as immoral.

A striking evidence of the sanctity with which treaties are clothed in general opinion is to be found in the fact that a nation is not only thought to be entitled to declare war if its ally be attacked, but is deemed to act dishonorably if it does not fulfil its treaty obligation.

Even if the diplomatist does not share the general prejudice against aggression or the general feeling regarding the obligation of treaties, the fact that these sentiments are general obliges him to take them into account. In fact, they always are taken into account, if not in the negotiations which precede a war, at least upon the outbreak of hostilities. At this last moment, each belligerent government invariably seeks to persuade its own people and the world at large that its cause is just.

The political advantages of the defensive position are obvious. An attacking nation, according to the expert testimony of Bismarck, will not fight at the outset with the same spirit and fire as a nation attacked. War is barbarism, and a nation at war readily reverts to the attitude of the barbarous community, which presents an extraordinary uniformity and solidity of feeling and of opinion; but this reversion is more rapid and more universal in a nation attacked than in a nation attacking. As Bismarck puts it:

> If our ordained authorities regard the war as necessary and have declared it, it will be carried on with all our fighting edge, and perhaps to victory, as soon as our men have come under fire and seen blood. But there will not be behind it the same vim and fire as in a war in which we are attacked.[1]

Among nations not primarily involved, there is always sympathy with the nation assailed and prejudice against the nation that appears to be the aggressor, unless it is clear that the latter has just cause for war. Accordingly, the duty of the diplomatist to keep his country free from the semblance of aggression is closely connected with the problem of securing outside support and averting a hostile coalition. International alliances are seldom by their terms offensive: as a rule they stipulate for support only against attack. If there be doubt which of the original belligerents has been guilty of aggression, the first overt act of hostility or of grave provocation may be decisive. It is especially likely to be decisive if the allied country is under a form of government in which the action of the executive is largely determined by public opinion. Much the same may be said as regards nations not previously in alliance with either of the original antagonists. If the interests of any such nation tend to draw it to one side or to the other, it will be somewhat less likely to support the aggressor than to intervene on the side of the nation attacked. This probability,

[1] Speech of February 6, 1888. If this statement is open to any criticism, it is that it fails to note the possibility that a nation may accept, without evidence or even against evidence, the assurance of its "ordained authorities" that the adversary is the aggressor.

also, increases in direct proportion to the influence of public opinion upon governmental action.

To sum up: what the diplomatist gains by maintaining the defensive attitude is not only the more rapid development of the fighting spirit in his own country, but also the greater probability that the alliances of his country will hold while those of his adversary will not, and that states not in alliance with either belligerent will support his country if their interests may thereby be promoted, and will remain neutral although their interests tend to draw them to the adversary's side. These advantages are indicated and the corresponding disadvantages of aggression are summed up in Bismarck's famous saying: "If we attack, the whole weight of the imponderables, which weigh much heavier than material weights, will be on the side of the adversaries whom we have attacked." [1]

One further consideration, already indicated, should perhaps be stated. Contemporary judgment regarding responsibility for war is necessarily based on the record. It takes cognizance only of notorious facts and of allegations that can be proved. This judgment may be erroneous. It may be reversed by history. For the diplomatist, however, it is not the ultimate verdict of history but the immediate verdict of contemporary opinion that is of importance.[2] In his appreciation of the value of the obvious inference as compared with the elusive fact, he does not lack philosophical support. Even before pragmatism was formulated, Wordsworth [3] wrote

> Assent is power, belief the soul of fact.

[1] Speech of February 6, 1888.

[2] Bismarck makes this point in his cynically frank story of the editing of the Ems dispatch. After reading the condensed version to Moltke and Roon, and explaining that it would have "the effect of a red rag upon the Gallic bull," he went on to say: "Success, however, depends essentially upon the impressions that are produced in our own and in other countries by the origin of the war; it is important that we be the ones attacked." Memoirs, p. 440; translation, vol. ii, p. 101. Doubts expressed by German historians regarding this Bismarck-Moltke-Roon conference do not here concern us. It is quite sufficient for our present purposes that Bismarck claimed to have made the statement cited.

[3] Memorials of a Tour in Italy. IV: At Rome—Regrets—In allusion to Niebuhr and other modern historians.

II

With Bismarck as its premier and minister of foreign affairs, Prussia waged three wars. In each instance Bismarck was reasonably sure of his alliances and of his neutralities: in none of these wars was his country confronted by a hostile coalition of superior force. In the war against Denmark (1864), Prussia had the support of Austria, and no other power intervened. In the Austro-Prussian war (1866), Austria was supported by the majority of the smaller German states, but Prussia had the assistance of Italy. Prussia was also assured of the friendly neutrality of Russia, and Bismarck was reasonably certain that, at least at the outset, France would remain neutral. In the war against France (1870) Prussia had all the smaller German states on its side, and Russia had promised to prevent Austria from aiding France.

In each of these wars Prussia's adversary either had broken a fairly recent treaty or was chargeable with the first overt act of aggression. In each case, accordingly, Prussia's position was correct, on the face of the record. Denmark had violated in 1863 a treaty concluded with Prussia and Austria in 1852. Denmark's action impaired important German interests, because it undertook, contrary to its promises, to incorporate the German inhabitants of Schleswig in the Danish state. In 1866 Austria had broken the Treaty of Gastein, concluded between Austria and Prussia in 1865. Austria indeed accused Prussia of breaking this treaty, but the Austrian breach preceded the Prussian. Austria also was chargeable with the first overt act of hostility in demanding that the German Confederation should employ military force against Prussia. It was tolerably clear at the time that Prussia was really forcing Austria into war, but on the face of the record Austria was the aggressor. In 1870, after the withdrawal of the Hohenzollern candidacy for the throne of Spain, the French foreign minister demanded guaranties for the future. Ollivier, who was at the time the French prime minister, says that this demand could be interpreted only as intended to bring on war.[1] Bismarck published the French demand and

[1] Ollivier, The Franco-Prussian War, translated by G. B. Ives (1912), pp. 224, 225.

King William's refusal, and France declared war. We know today that Bismarck had promoted the Spanish candidacy. We know further, that the French demand for guaranties would probably have been dropped, in consequence of the remonstrances of neutral powers, if Bismarck had not cut off this line of retreat by the form in which he published the news of the French demand and of its refusal. This, as he intended, made it impossible for the French government to retreat from its ill-chosen position without loss of prestige. In the light of our present knowledge, responsibility for that war cannot be placed wholly on either party. War was desired on both sides of the Rhine. At the time, however, it seemed clear that France was the aggressor and that Germany was waging a purely defensive war.

In none of the wars conducted under Bismarck's diplomatic guidance was Prussia assured of British neutrality. Bismarck made no effort to secure definite pledges, because under the British parliamentary system a government has no power formally to commit the country to war or to peace. Here, accordingly, the immediate reaction of public opinion was of the highest importance, and the formal correctness of the Prussian position in each war was of great value. In 1864 Great Britain sympathized with Denmark. It was not in the British interest that any portion of the coast of the North Sea should pass out of the control of a small state into that of a great state. Denmark, however, refused to recognize its treaty obligations; Prussia was supported by Austria; and Great Britain could secure no continental support against this combination. Great Britain accordingly gave Denmark only diplomatic support. In 1866 no British interest was at stake in the war between the two leading German powers, and, as between Austria and Italy, British sympathy was with Italy. In 1870 no British interest seemed to be involved in the struggle between Germany and France. And even if British interests had been involved, it would have been difficult for the British government to find any decent pretext for war. Not only did Bismarck cheerfully pledge observance of Belgian neutrality, but, shortly after the outbreak of the war, he published the draft of an unratified

treaty between France and Prussia providing, in certain contingencies, for the annexation of Belgium by France; and he invited the representatives of the powers in Berlin to satisfy themselves, by inspection of the manuscript, that the draft was in the handwriting of the French ambassador, M. Benedetti. The effect upon British opinion was all that Bismarck could desire. It should be added that, in proportion as it became clear that Prussia was solving the problem of German unity, the public opinion of the world, fully convinced of the legitimacy of the principle of nationality, became increasingly favorable to the Prussian policy.

After 1871 it was the chief aim of Bismarck's diplomacy to avert the formation of any coalition against Germany. In this he was wholly successful. When he was removed from office by William II, in 1890, Germany, Austria and Italy were in open defensive alliance. By a secret treaty, moreover,—the so-called "reinsurance treaty," which first became known in 1896,[1] —Germany and Russia had agreed that each would observe a benevolent neutrality if the other were attacked by a third power. The chief advantage which this network of treaties gave Germany was the complete isolation of France. In case of a French attack, Germany's back was fully protected. A further advantage of these treaties was to place Germany, in any dispute between Austria and Russia, virtually in the position of an umpire. If Russia attacked Austria, Germany was bound to support Austria. If Austria attacked Russia, Germany was bound to observe a benevolent neutrality. And it was for Germany to determine, in case of an Austro-Russian war, which was the attacking party and what were Germany's treaty obliga-

[1] The existence of this treaty until 1890, and its non-renewal in that year, were first made known in an article in the *Hamburger Nachrichten*, October 24, 1896. In 1890 and the following years it was no secret that the *Hamburger Nachrichten* was Bismarck's special organ; but his personal responsibility for particular articles was a matter of conjecture. His relation to this newspaper is at last definitely stated, and the more important articles inspired or dictated by him are reproduced, in Hofmann, Fürst Bismarck, 1890–98 (1913). The article of October 24, 1896, is reprinted in vol. ii, pp. 370–372. The treaty with Russia was not kept secret from the governments of Austria-Hungary and Italy. Bismarck, November 1, 1896, in Hofmann, vol. ii, p. 378. *Cf.* Munroe Smith, "Bismarck's Latest Revelation," in *Harper's Weekly*, December 12, 1896.

tions. In the seeming tangle of agreements, Germany really had its hands almost wholly free.

Formally, Germany's defensive alliance with Austria and its reinsurance treaty with Russia imposed upon Germany no conflicting duties. Materially also, according to Bismarck, the treaties were consistent in their purpose. In his view, expressed in speeches made during his chancellorship, Germany had no interests in the Balkans which would justify it in risking "the sound bones of a single Pomeranian musketeer."[1] Russia and Austria, however, had interests in this region, and a conflict between their interests might easily lead to war. The danger of such a conflict was minimized by the recognition of a Russian sphere of influence in the eastern portion of the peninsula and of an Austrian sphere in the western. This arrangement was established by the two powers concerned at Reichstadt, where, before beginning war against Turkey, Russia secured the neutrality of Austria by agreeing to an eventual Austrian occupation of Bosnia.[2] To this arrangement Germany gave loyal support, notably when Russia's treatment of Prince Alexander of Bulgaria aroused popular resentment in Germany. "What is Bulgaria to us, or we to Bulgaria?" Bismarck asked his hearers in the Reichstag. And again:

> Bulgaria is assuredly not an object of sufficient magnitude that, on its account, Europe from Moscow to the Pyrenees and from the Baltic to Palermo should be hurried into a war of which no one can foresee the issue. In the end, after the war, we should hardly know what we had been fighting about.[3]

Read "Servia" for "Bulgaria" and these words might have been spoken in 1914.

Not only, in Bismarck's view, had Germany no interest either in supporting or in impeding a Russian movement towards Constantinople,[4] but he believed that

[1] Speech of December 5, 1879.

[2] Bismarck, January 24, 1892, in Hofmann, vol. ii, p. 5.

[3] Speech of February 6, 1888.

[4] Bismarck, December 17, 1892, in Hofmann, vol. ii, p. 187.

it would be of advantage to Germany if the Russians . . . established themselves in Constantinople and had to defend it. We should then no longer be in a position to be used by England, and occasionally also by Austria, as the dog to be set barking against Russian lustings for the Bosphorus, but we could wait to see whether Austria was attacked.[1]

Accordingly, in Bismarck's construction:

The treaty of 1879 (regarding the German-Austrian alliance) related, as against Russia, solely to an eventual attack by that power upon the allies. On the part of Germany, the view consistently represented at Vienna was that the alliance covered only the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, not also its Oriental policy against Russia. For this Austria was always advised by Germany to seek protection by separate agreements with equally interested states, such as England and Italy.[2]

The position which Bismarck had obtained for Germany, the central position on the see-saw of Austro-Russian politics, was assuredly capable of being utilized, as Bismarck asserted it was to be utilized, for the preservation of the peace of Europe.[3] Austrian or Russian movements which threatened to disturb the balance of power in the Balkan peninsula could be checked by a very moderate degree of pressure from Berlin. All that was necessary was to insist that each of these powers should refrain from invading the sphere of influence assigned to the other. And so long as Russia could be restrained from attacking Austria, and Germany was not compelled to intervene, there could be no joint action of France and Russia against the Triple Alliance. For this reason, Bismarck tells us, the German-Russian reinsurance treaty (of which Austria and Italy were fully cognizant) was welcomed by these powers.

[1] Memoirs, p. 601; translation, vol, ii, p. 288.

[2] Bismarck, January 24, 1892, in Hofmann, vol. ii, p. 4. In an earlier article, April 26, 1890, Bismarck said: "The Triple Alliance covers only the *damnum emergens*, not the *lucrum cessans*, of the powers concerned. Least of all is it Germany's affair to promote ambitious plans of Austria in the Balkans." *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 256. *Cf.* article July 15, 1892, *ibid.*, vol. ii, p. 119. And again, July 17, 1892: "Why should the burden of resistance to Russia be rolled off the shoulders of the interested British Empire upon those of the disinterested German Empire?" *Ibid.*, vol. ii, p. 123.

[3] Bismarck, November 1, 1896, in Hofmann, vol. ii, p. 378.

Our allies indeed had confidence that the Triple Alliance would be able to support a war on two sides, but . . . it seemed to them preferable that a war which would demand from all the continental powers the most monstrous sacrifices in blood, money and property should be avoided altogether.[1]

The keystone of Bismarck's entire foreign policy, from the beginning to the end of his official career, was the maintenance of friendly relations with Russia. Without Russian neutrality, the wars which established German unity could not have been waged. As long as Russia was friendly, no dangerous coalition could be formed against the united Germany. In his memoirs, which were his political testament, he repeatedly insists upon the necessity and the possibility of maintaining the German-Russian friendship. "With France," he wrote, "we shall never have peace; with Russia, never the necessity of war, unless liberal stupidities or dynastic blunders falsify the situation."[2]

With Great Britain, after 1871, Germany's relations, although never cordial, were usually friendly and never really strained. The inauguration, in 1884, of a German colonial policy naturally aroused British jealousy but gave no ground for hostility. In its colonial ventures, Bismarck told Hofmann, Germany should look for "sure advantages without disproportionately great risks, especially without conflict with older and stronger sea powers."[3]

Bismarck's success in establishing alliances and in averting the formation of any hostile coalition against Germany was due, in no small degree, to the spirit and temper in which he conducted Germany's diplomacy. He fully realized, not only the antagonism which new power arouses, but the dangers of new power to its possessor. They resemble, as he himself more than once indicated, the dangers of new wealth to the individual. These, as we all know, are what Richard Henry Stoddard once described as "the unconscious insolence of conscious opulence," and, associated with this, an extreme sensitiveness to criticism,

[1] Bismarck, *loc. cit.*

[2] Memoirs, p. 210; translation, vol. i, p. 247.

[3] Hofmann, vol. i, p. 125.

which may easily manifest itself in increased arrogance. With the similar tendencies of new power we Americans are quite familiar, for we ourselves exhibited them in a thoroughly typical way in the nineteenth century, particularly in the period between the Mexican War and the Civil War. Nor, I regret to confess, have we yet fully outgrown these tendencies. "Shirt-sleeves" diplomacy is quite unmistakably parvenu diplomacy.

To indicate these dangers of new power, Bismarck, as I have said, employed the very comparison which I have developed. In 1890, in an English speech to a body of British shipowners, he said that, in the society of nations, "Germany may be compared to a self-made man, whereas England is as an old aristocratic lord."[1] And when his policy toward Russia was assailed as conciliatory to the point of subservience, he characterized the attitude of his critics as follows:

> No far-seeing reckoning with existing factors of European policy is to characterize German statecraft; its efforts are not to be directed to helping, as far as possible, to avoid wars of which the outcome would be incalculable; but Germany should assume, in Europe, an attitude of provocation and play the part of the man who, suddenly enriched and presuming on the dollars in his pocket, tries to trample over everybody.[2]

It is not, I think, too much to say that Bismarck handled the new power of Germany as if it were old power. Temperamentally, he was highly sensitive to criticism; openly, as imperial chancellor, he disregarded it. Attacks in the foreign press, he said, were to him "printer's ink on paper." If any criticisms seemed to require answers, Germany's cause was defended neither by its officials, domestic or foreign, nor by declarations signed by university professors, but by unofficial communications or inspired leading articles in the newspapers, and usually in newspapers that had no overt relations with the German government. What was of more importance, Bismarck's conduct of foreign affairs was quite in harmony with Mr. Roosevelt's formula:

[1] The [London] *Times*, July 3, 1890. *Cf.* Hofmann, vol. i, p. 279.

[2] Bismarck, October 3, 1891, in Hofmann, vol. i, p. 382.

if he carried a big stick, he walked softly. Only against France, whose resentment Germany could not hope to appease, was the big stick occasionally shaken. This happened, usually, when the exigencies of democratic politics led French public men to indulge in the form of sport which, in American politics, has been known as "twisting the lion's tail."[1] In Germany's dealings with other powers there were no threats and no bluster. Assurances that Germany was one of the "satisfied nations" and desired nothing but peace were made more credible by quiet settlement of disputes: witness the manner in which Bismarck handled the conflict with Spain over the Carolines and that with the United States regarding the Samoan Islands.

III

Before the outbreak of the present war, arrangements were making in Germany to celebrate the centennial of Bismarck's birth, which will fall on April 1, 1915. Whether such celebrations will be held, and on what scale they will be conducted, I am not informed. In any such celebrations, German writers and speakers will be confronted with a task of no little delicacy. It will not be easy to praise Bismarck's diplomacy without suggesting unfavorable comparisons.

After Bismarck's dismissal from the imperial chancellorship, there was (with one important exception, presently to be noted) no change in the general trend of German foreign policy. But there were changes in tone and in manner. There was some rather "big talk" on the part of the emperor, which other nations took for the most part humorously. There were appearances "in shining armor," with occasional shakings of the "mailed fist," which were taken more seriously. Peace was preserved, but on more than one occasion by employing that double-edged and dangerous weapon, the threat of war. Oversea expansion was pushed more vigorously, and not always in

[1] *Cf.* statement of Thiers in Hohenlohe's diary, July 8, 1875: "I spoke then of the rumors of war. Thiers said those were disseminated for party motives and would increase. Moreover, they would be turned to account for electioneering purposes. We should not allow ourselves to be misled thereby." Memoirs of Prince Hohenlohe, translation, vol. ii, p. 155.

accordance with Bismarck's notion that the flag should follow, not precede, trade. "When I was chancellor," he told Hofmann, "we never stepped in with the protection of the Empire until the German trader or colonist had acquired in foreign parts interests of sufficient magnitude and importance; we never hurried on ahead of him."[1] And Hofmann tells us that when he showed Bismarck the first map of the East Asiatic coast on which the German leasehold of Kiaochau was marked off, the prince looked at it for some time and then said: "Big enough for all sorts of foolishness."[2] What he would have thought of the effort to get a foothold in Morocco we can only conjecture; but we know that he gave diplomatic support to France in Tunis, on the ground that it was desirable that French attention should be distracted from "the hole in the Vosges." With the Agadir incident fresh in his mind, Hofmann wrote:

> Our Pan-Germanists hold a fundamentally false opinion of Bismarck if they believe that he, if still alive and in office, would have slashed in with the sabre in Morocco, in Persia, or anywhere else, to uphold claims which corresponded rather to the desires of our national-expansionists than to the facts of the situation or the rights of Germany.[3]

Closely associated with imperialistic expansion is the tendency to take part in world politics even where national interests are not directly involved. The diplomatic intervention of Germany, in unison with Russia and France, to compel Japan, in 1895, to surrender the peninsula of Liaotung aroused in Bismarck's mind apprehensions which were expressed in two leading articles in the journal which he controlled. If this joint action meant better relations with Russia, it was of advantage, but why should Germany arouse Japanese hostility? To Bismarck, it looked like "working for prestige"; and his second article intimated that he would not have interfered.[4]

The one point in which German foreign policy changed immediately after Bismarck's retirement was in Germany's rela-

[1] Hofmann, vol. i, p. 126.

[2] *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 227.

[3] *Ibid.*, vol. i, pp. 118, 119.

[4] May 7 and 23; *ibid.*, vol. ii, pp. 298, 302.

tions to Russia. In 1890 the reinsurance treaty with that power lapsed, by the expiration of the term for which it was concluded, and, although Russia was willing to renew it, the German imperial government decided to abandon it. Count Caprivi, Bismarck was informed, found Germany's treaty relations with Austria and Russia "too complicated." Bismarck admitted, with a certain malice, that "the maintenance of these relations of course required a considerable degree of diplomatic skill."[1] The probable results of this change of policy seemed to Bismarck very grave. He feared that Germany and Russia would steadily drift further apart; and he lived to see this apprehension realized. He feared that Russia, seeking support against the Triple Alliance, would eventually come to an understanding with France, and he lived to see the beginnings of the *entente* between these powers. He believed, and asserted as early as 1891: "From the moment when the conviction is established in Vienna that the bridge between Germany and Russia is broken down, Austria will assume a different attitude toward the German Empire, and Germany will run the risk of becoming, in a sense, dependent on Austria."[2] And in the following year he wrote: "Already there are indications that the attitude of German policy is no longer completely neutral in Eastern affairs, as it was formerly to Germany's advantage."[3] During the later years of his life he repeated his warnings against breaking with Russia and against identifying Germany's interests with those of Austria in the Balkans; and in his memoirs he wrote:

If the breach, or even the alienation, between us and Russia should seem irremediable, then Vienna would believe itself entitled to make greater claims upon the services of its German ally; first, in the extension of the *casus foederis*, which, up till now, according to the published text, goes no further than defense against a Russian attack upon Austria; secondly, in a request to substitute for the *casus foederis*, as now defined, the representation of Austrian interests in the Balkans

[1] Bismarck, January 24, 1892, in Hofmann, vol. ii, p. 4.

[2] January 28, 1891, *ibid.*, vol. i, p. 314.

[3] January 24, 1892, *ibid.*, vol. ii, p. 5.

and in the East. . . . It is not, however, the duty of the German Empire to lend its subjects, with their goods and their lives, for the realization of its neighbor's aspirations. [1]

In Germany, these warnings fell on deaf ears. Bismarck, of course, was disgruntled; nothing that his successors could do was right; he was simply an old grumbler. For us the question is not whether his utterances were dictated by vanity and vindictiveness or by patriotic solicitude, but whether he was right.

The development of a common German-Austrian policy in the Balkan peninsula, which Bismarck feared, was furthered by the German policy of seeking to develop, not only the economic, but also the political influence of Germany in the Turkish Empire. The establishment and consolidation of German influence in Turkey could hardly be regarded by Russia in any other light than as an invasion of what Germany and Austria had previously recognized as the Russian sphere of influence. Very naturally the Russian government deemed itself no longer bound by the arrangements which Germany disregarded, and it began to take measures to establish Russian influence in the western Balkans. Thus arose the rivalry between Austria and Russia for the control of Servia which has led to the present world war.

Of this newer German policy Bismarck expressed his opinion in advance, and before his retirement from power, when, after stating his belief that "the European crisis most likely to arise is the Eastern crisis," he proceeded to condemn any attempt of Germany to interfere in the Balkans, saying: "A great power which attempts to exert pressure on the policy of other countries, outside of its own sphere of interest, is taking risks. . . . It is following a policy of power, not one of interest; it is working for prestige." [2]

When the German-Austrian alliance was diverted from its original defensive purpose and became an alliance for the control of the Balkan peninsula, Italy's adhesion to this alliance

[1] Memoirs, p. 591; translation, vol. ii, p. 276, 277.

[2] Speech of February 6, 1888.

ceased to correspond to Italian interests. Austria and Italy had no common interests in the Balkans except to resist the extension of Russian influence. An increased control by Austria of the eastern coast of the Adriatic was, from the Italian point of view, as undesirable as the control of this coast by any strong Slav state. Accordingly, the new German policy in the Balkans tended inevitably to the disruption of the Triple Alliance. After the Balkan war, Austria and Italy were able to agree in opposing the annexation of Albania by the Balkan allies, and in creating a nominally independent principality; but the suspicion of each that the other was endeavoring to control the new state led to controversies which, in the early summer of 1914, seemed to imperil the maintenance of friendly relations between the two powers. This also was a contingency which Bismarck had envisaged. In the event of the collapse of the Triple Alliance, he wrote in 1892, "it would be for Germany a very serious situation if, in order to avoid isolation, it had no choice but to go with Austria in the East through thick and thin."[1]

One of the ablest of Bismarck's successors in the chancellorship, Prince von Bülow, stated, when he assumed that office, and has since maintained, that no statesman, not even a Bismarck, can determine the future development of a nation's policy. Germany, von Bülow says, can not be held to old methods and aims.[2] In general, this statement is indisputable. Nevertheless, as regards aims which were taking form in Bismarck's time or which he clearly foresaw, his favorable or unfavorable judgment is of weight. As regards new methods, it is admissible to inquire whether they have proved as advantageous, in their direct and indirect results, as those which he employed.

IV

The position of Germany today is strikingly different from that in which Bismarck left it in 1890. Today Germany and Austria are confronted by a formidable coalition. Italy is neutral. Rumania, supposed to have been in sympathy with the Triple Alliance, is also neutral. The armed support of

[1] Bismarck, January 24, 1892, in Hofmann, vol. ii, p. 6.

[2] Imperial Germany, translation, p. 16.

Turkey has indeed been secured, not by diplomacy of the ordinary kind, but by a *coup d'état* engineered by German officers in the Turkish military service. The participation of Turkey in the war, however, increases the probability of further interventions, through which military forces greater than those of the sultan may be thrown upon the side of the hostile coalition. In population and in economic resources the enemies of Germany, Austria and Turkey are greatly superior; on the sea, their fighting power is many times greater; on land, in spite of inferior preparation, their power seems to be substantially equal, even if Japan's army be left out of the reckoning. The German emperor is reported to have said: "The more enemies, the more honor," but the saying is true of the soldier only. For the diplomatist, the more enemies, the less honor.

In striking contrast, again, with the position which Prussia held in every war which it waged in Bismarck's time, is the fact that on the face of the record Austria and Germany are the aggressors. The correspondence published by five of the belligerents has been examined and analyzed so often and so minutely that I shall only recapitulate the points which have most strongly influenced neutral opinion.

Until Austrian diplomacy emerged into publicity with the ultimatum to Servia on July 23, the Dual Monarchy appeared to have strong claims on neutral sympathy. Continued hostile agitation in Servia; alleged intrigues in Austria's Slav provinces; pledges of more neighborly behavior repeatedly broken; finally, the murder of the successor to the throne, through a conspiracy asserted to have been framed in the Servian capital and to have been abetted by Servian officials—these were indeed grievances. Neutral sympathy was sensibly lessened by the far-reaching demands formulated in the Austrian ultimatum, and even more by the unusual and peremptory tone of this undiplomatic communication. From the diplomatic point of view, the Russian minister of foreign affairs was quite justified in saying that its form was "scarcely clever" (*peu habile*).[1] Neutral sympathy

[1] Russian Orange Paper, no. 25. Even the German secretary of state confessed that "the note left much to be desired as a diplomatic document." British Blue Book, no. 18.

began to shift to the other side in consequence of Servia's unexpectedly conciliatory reply and Austria's refusal to recognize Servia's concessions as a possible basis for negotiation or mediation. Instead of turning away wrath, Servia's soft answer elicited a declaration of war. Whatever neutral inclination toward the Austrian cause remained was stricken through with doubt by the revelations of M. Giolitti, former prime minister of Italy. He has told us that in August, 1913, Italy was notified that Austria contemplated action against Servia; that it deemed such action defensive; and that it hoped to receive German and Italian support. The Italian answer was that such action could not be regarded as defensive. "Our interpretation of the treaty," Giolitti added, "was accepted by our allies."[1] This revelation has not unnaturally produced the impression that Austria's action in 1914 was determined less by Servian intrigues and Servian faithlessness than by a matured resolution to seize the first favorable opportunity to strengthen the position of the Dual Monarchy in the Balkan peninsula.

Germany had given its ally "an entirely free hand" in its action against Servia.[2] Germany's efforts to maintain the peace of Europe, whether through its ordinary diplomatic service or through the direct appeals of the German emperor to other sovereigns, were limited to trying to "localize" the conflict, that is, to trying to keep Austria's hands free against Servia.

This, at least, was the attitude of Austria and Germany July 23–28. On the 29th, at Germany's request,[3] the Austrian ambassador at St. Petersburg was directed to begin conversations with the Russian minister of foreign affairs. Within the two following days, Austria had agreed to consider the withdrawal of such of its demands as were deemed incompatible with Servia's independence, and to admit mediation on this point; and Russia had agreed to suspend its military preparations if Austria would stay its action against Servia.[4] At this juncture,

[1] Speech in the Italian Parliament, December 5, 1914. See American newspapers of December 7.

[2] German White Paper, Memorandum.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] Russian Orange Paper, nos. 53, 60, 67; French Yellow Book, nos. 104, 114, 120, 121; British Blue Book, nos. 97, 103, 161 (especially p. 83).

however, on July 31, Germany demanded that Russia should demobilize, and, upon Russia's refusal, declared war, August 1. On July 31, Germany inquired what attitude France would assume in a war between Germany and Russia, and, receiving no satisfactory assurances on this point, declared war against France, August 3. On August 2 Germany invaded Luxemburg, and on the evening of the same day, it demanded free passage through Belgium, under express threat of war and scarcely veiled threat of annexation.[1] On Belgium's refusal, German troops crossed the Belgian frontier, August 4.

If any one of the series of events which precipitated the European war can be regarded as decisive, it was the action of Germany in declaring war because Russia was mobilizing. In international theory and practice, however, mobilization is not generally regarded as cause for war. The proper answer to mobilization is mobilization.[2]

On the other hand, on the face of the record, Servia, Russia, France and Belgium were, each and all of them, countries attacked; and none of them, with the possible exception of Servia, had committed any overt act which gave Austria or Germany formal cause for war.

With Great Britain, it is true, Germany sought to maintain peace, and it was Great Britain that attacked Germany. Germany, however, gave Great Britain an unimpeachable ground for declaring war by violating treaty obligations which secured long-recognized and important British interests.[3] Great Britain

[1] "If Belgium consents, in the war about to commence, to take up an attitude of friendly neutrality toward Germany, the German government on its part undertakes, on the declaration of peace, to guarantee the kingdom and its possessions in their whole extent. . . . If Belgium behaves in a hostile manner . . . Germany will take no engagements towards Belgium but will leave the later settlement of the relations of the two states toward one another to the decision of arms." Belgian Gray Paper, no. 20.

[2] For Bismarck's theory and practice, *cf. infra*, pp. 65, 66.

[3] None of the arguments advanced by Germany's apologists to show that the treaties of 1839, neutralizing Belgium, were no longer binding on Prussia (either because Prussia has become a part of the German Empire, or because provisional agreements, reinforcing these treaties, were made in 1870) has any basis in international theory or practice. Moreover, the intention of Germany to respect these treaties was asserted by the present imperial chancellor in 1911 and by the present imperial secretary of state in 1913. *Cf.* Belgian Gray Paper, no. 12, and enclosures.

attacked Germany by the same right by which Prussia and Austria attacked Denmark in 1864. That Great Britain had other grounds for declaring war is not disputed. They are indicated in the correspondence published by the British government,[1] and they were frankly stated—and put first—by Sir Edward Grey in his speech in the House of Commons, August 3.[2] If among its various grounds for declaring war, the British government finally selected that which was formally the best and which would appeal most strongly to public sentiment in Great Britain and in other countries, it is not chargeable with insincerity or with hypocrisy. Any other course would have been unintelligent. As far as the appeal to public sentiment is concerned, Austria and Germany acted in the same way; the former in the stress it laid upon the crime of Serajevo, the latter in charging the Russian emperor with "perfidy" because his armies were mobilizing while the German emperor was conducting direct personal negotiations with him.[3]

On the face of the record again, the powers of the Triple Entente, and preëminently Great Britain, exhibited an apparently sincere desire to maintain the peace of Europe. In the brief time available, between Austria's ultimatum to Servia, July 23, and Germany's ultimatum to Russia, July 31, these powers, and also Italy, seem to have made every possible effort to avert war.

The Austrian and German governments assert, indeed, that these efforts were insincere. They claim that in reality Russia was the prime aggressor. They asserted from the outset that Russia had no right to intervene, even through its diplomacy, to protect Servia. If the division of spheres of influence in the Balkan peninsula, as it existed at the close of the nineteenth century, had persisted, this assertion would be plausible. In fact, however, as we have seen, this arrangement had long been abandoned,[4] and primarily because of German encroachments upon the Russian sphere of influence.[4] By attacking

[1] *Cf.* British Blue Book, especially nos. 89, 101, 111. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 89–96.

[3] This was the *casus belli* emphasized in all the German newspapers in the early days of August.

[4] For Austrian recognition of its abandonment, at least since the Balkan War, *cf.* British Blue Book, nos. 91, 118.

Servia, Austria menaced the existing balance of power in the Balkans; and it was on this ground, not on the ground of a duty to protect a Slav state, that Russia intervened.[1] Austria indeed declared that it had no intention of disturbing the balance of power,[2] and it offered to promise not to annex Servian territory; but it was unable to satisfy Russia that Servian independence was not threatened.[3] It was precisely on this last point that negotiations were in progress when Germany declared war.

The German government asserts that Belgium had ceased to be neutral and was virtually in alliance with France and Great Britain.[4] If this assertion could be proved, the strongest prejudice which Germany's conduct of the war has aroused in neutral countries would tend to disappear. In America, at least, few people care whether the treaties of 1839 were or were not in force and binding upon Prussia. Even if Belgium was no longer a neutralized country, it was apparently a neutral country, and it has been ravaged with fire and steel because so the German armies could reach France most quickly. What, however, has Germany been able to prove? Only that British military attachés had concerted with Belgian military authorities plans of joint action against a German invasion. If, as is insisted, no consultations were held with German military attachés to provide for the defence of Belgian neutrality against a French or British invasion, what does that prove? Only that the Belgians knew well or guessed rightly on which side their neutrality was menaced.

The German assertion, made in the ultimatum to Belgium, that France was planning to send troops through Belgium into Germany, and the more recent assertion that Great Britain intended to send troops into Belgium without waiting until German troops crossed the Belgian frontier, can have no influence upon neutral opinion. Neither in law nor in morals, public or

[1] Russian Orange Paper, no. 77.

[2] German White Paper, Memorandum and annex 10.

[3] Russian Orange Paper, nos. 41, 60, 67.

[4] The Case of Belgium, in the light of official reports found in the archives of the Belgian government. With an introduction by Dr. Bernhard Dernburg (n. d.).

private, is a wrong excused by alleging, or even by proving, that a similar wrong was contemplated by an adversary. Moreover, neither of these assertions has been proved. Of such an intention on the part of the French government no evidence has been submitted; and the only evidence adduced to prove such an intention on the part of the British government is the opinion expressed by a British military attaché.[1] It is, however, a matter of common knowledge that military attachés are never empowered to commit their governments to any line of action, and that their opinions, if not purely personal, reflect at most the desires of their military chiefs, not the intentions of the political heads of government.

In asserting that they were really attacked or threatened with attack, Austria and Germany are today in the position in which Bismarck's adversaries habitually found themselves; they can not prove their assertions. If in the future, on the basis of evidence which we do not possess, the historian shall be able to show that in 1914 the Triple Entente brought about a European war in order to crush Germany and dismember Austria, he will still be forced to say that the conspiring governments played the diplomatic game according to Bismarckian traditions; and if he fails to attribute to Grey or to Sazonoff as high a degree of adroitness as Bismarck displayed, it will be because the ineptitude of their adversaries made their task easier than his.

V

The inferiority of Austrian and German diplomacy in 1914 to that of Bismarck in the German unity wars might plausibly be explained by the personal difference between a statesman of genius and the average diplomatist. This, however, hardly accounts for the inferiority of Austro-German diplomacy to that of the Triple Entente. It is the chief purpose of this paper to suggest an explanation.

In the histories, biographies and memoirs of the Bismarckian period we read of conflicts between the Prussian premier and German chancellor on the one hand, and the military leaders,

[1] The Case of Belgium, p. 12.

notably the chief of the General Staff, on the other. These are usually regarded as collisions of strong personalities, ascribable largely to competing personal ambitions. They mean more than this. They represent the natural and apparently necessary antithesis of the political and the military mind; and they typify the perpetual and universal struggle between diplomacy and military strategy.

We have seen what Bismarck thought of policies of power and of prestige. To the soldier, however, the state is power; and the fear which its power inspires in other states, which is one form of prestige, is essential to its welfare, if not to its existence. Prestige, however, which is at best only the image or reflection of the substantial, and may be mere semblance or illusion, is protean in its aspects. It is often the reflection of success. It is often the illusion of dignity or of honor. To General Bernhardi (who in this respect, as in others, typifies the military mind) honor and dignity, as well as success in war and the fear which such success inspires, are all indistinguishably blended in the notion of prestige. He writes:

> War seems imperative when, although the material basis of power is not threatened, the moral influence of the state . . . seems to be prejudiced. . . . Apparently trifling causes may under certain circumstances constitute a fully justifiable *casus belli*, if the honor of the state, and consequently its moral prestige, are endangered. An antagonist must never be allowed to believe that there is any lack of determination to assert this prestige, even if the sword must be drawn to do so.[1]

Very weighty and very thorny questions are begged in the vague phrase, "under certain circumstances." The sentiments which long maintained the duel in England and in America, and still maintain it in continental Europe, are far stronger in the military class than among civilians. Today, as in the sixteenth century, the soldier is "jealous in honor, sudden and quick in quarrel." To slight discourtesies, even to lack of deference, the European officer, and particularly the German officer, exhibits an extreme sensitiveness. This reappears, pushed to the point

[1] Bernhardi, Germany and the Next War, translation, pp. 49, 50.

of caricature, in the German corps student. Closely related to this sensitiveness is the disastrous notion that "trifling causes" may so endanger the prestige of the state as to justify war. Bismarck was a Junker; he had swung the *Schläger* at Göttingen; he was a Prussian military officer; but Bismarck the statesman wrote: "International conflicts, which can be settled only by wars between peoples, I have never regarded from the point of view of the student duel and its code of honor." [1]

Another difference between the military and the political mind, less fundamental, perhaps, but not less important, reveals itself when there is question of anticipating a war because it is deemed inevitable and the moment seems favorable. On this point Bismarck and Moltke were, on at least two occasions, of different opinions. In 1867, during the dispute over Luxemburg, Moltke said to a fellow member of the North German Parliament, Count Bethusy-Huc:

> I cannot but wish that the occasion given for a war with France were taken advantage of. Unhappily I regard this war as absolutely unavoidable within the next five years, and within this period the now indisputable superiority of our organization and weapons will be equaled by France. . . . The sooner, therefore, we come to blows the better.

Bethusy laid Moltke's views before Bismarck. The latter "recognized the justice of Moltke's remarks," but declared that he could not assume responsibility for the course of action proposed. "The personal conviction of a ruler or statesman, however well founded, that war would eventually break out, could not justify its promotion. Unforeseen events might alter the situation and avert what seemed inevitable." [2]

In 1875, again, when Germany was disquieted by the rapid reëstablishment of French power and by the apparently general

[1] Memoirs, p. 605; translation, vol. ii, p. 294.

[2] Essays, Speeches and Memoirs of Count Helmuth von Moltke, translation (1893), vol. ii, pp. 204, 205. Bismarck alludes to this episode in his Memoirs, pp. 441, 442, translation, vol. ii, p. 103. There is other contemporary evidence that in 1867 he was not convinced that war with France was either inevitable or desirable. In 1870 his view had changed. He had decided that war with France was necessary for the completion of German unity and was therefore to be promoted. *Cf.* article, January 16, 1893, in Hofmann, vol. ii, pp. 196, 197.

desire of the French people for revenge, and when the German military party wished to crush France before it became stronger, Bismarck opposed the plan. Of this episode he wrote:

Such a war, in my opinion, would not have led to permanently tenable conditions in Europe, but might well have given rise to a common feeling of distrust on the part of Russia, Austria and England and eventually to concerted action on their part against the new and not yet consolidated Empire, which, in waging such a war, would have started on the road on which the first and second French Empires, in a continuous policy of war and prestige, went to meet destruction. Europe would have seen in our action an abuse of the power we had acquired, and everyone's hand . . . would have been persistently raised against Germany or would have been on the sword hilt.[1]

According to Bismarck, the military plan of seizing the first favorable opportunity of crushing France was not abandoned in 1875. "Later also," he says, this plan was advocated; but he remained convinced that it was impossible to say that any war was inevitable. No one, he said, "can look into the cards held by Providence."[2] And, as was his wont, he summed up his views in a single pregnant phrase, declaring that offensive war to anticipate a possible attack was, "in a sense, suicide in apprehension of death."

[1] Memoirs, p. 519; translation, vol. ii, p. 192. *Cf. ibid.*, pp. 516–522; translation, vol. ii, pp. 188–195. *Cf.* also article, November 4, 1892, in Hofmann, vol. ii, pp. 160, 161.

It was assumed at the time in France and in England, and it is still commonly asserted, that Bismarck himself supported the plan of attacking France in 1875, and was deterred only by Russian and English protests. Of this I find no proof; and such an attitude on Bismarck's part seems to me improbable, because it would have been inconsistent with his entire policy from 1871 to the close of his administration. By those who assert Bismarck's desire to force a war in 1875, no value is attached to his own denials; wrongly, I think; for while Bismarck sometimes was guilty of suppressing the truth and of suggesting falsehood, he had a possibly inconsistent but very marked unwillingness to employ the lie direct. Testimony that Bismarck was not in sympathy with the plan of the military party is afforded in the diary of Prince Hohenlohe, who at the time was the German ambassador in Paris. *Cf.* Memoirs of Prince Hohenlohe, translation, vol. ii, pp. 129, 131, 145–146, 155, 160. The truth seems to be that Bismarck permitted the threat of war to be carried to a certain point for the sake of checking open expression of French hostility.

[2] Memoirs, p. 442; translation, vol. ii, p. 103.

Bernhardi reasserts the military point of view:

When there are indications of an offensive alliance of stronger enemies who only await the favorable moment to strike, the moral duty of the state towards its citizens is to begin the struggle while the prospects of success and the political circumstances are still tolerably favorable.[1]

Bismarck did not live to see the formation of the Triple Entente, to which Bernhardi obviously alludes; but, long before Russia and France had joined hands, he had spoken of the possibility of a future war with these powers and of the attitude which Germany should assume. In 1888, addressing the German Parliament, he said:

If I were to come before you and say: We are seriously menaced by France and by Russia; it is to be foreseen that we shall be attacked; that is my conviction as a diplomatist, based also on military information; for our defense it is better to employ the anticipatory thrust of the attack and open hostilities at once; accordingly, I ask the Imperial Diet for a credit of a milliard of marks in order to start the war against both our neighbors—well, gentlemen, I do not know whether you have sufficient confidence in me to vote such a grant. I hope not. . . . We must not let the advantage of the defensive position escape us, even if at the moment we are . . . superior to our future enemies. . . . Even if we are attacked at an unfavorable moment, we shall be strong enough for our defense. And we shall keep the chance of peace, leaving it to Divine Providence to determine whether in the meantime the necessity of war may not disappear.[2]

It is not when war seems probable in the near future, but when it is in sight, that military considerations come into sharpest conflict with the aims of the diplomatist. On more than one occasion, during the German unity wars, the military demand for prompt action threatened to deprive Bismarck of the time he needed for the attainment of his diplomatic ends. In 1864, when it seemed to him of the utmost importance that Prussia should take no steps without Austria, it was a military point of honor that menaced his policy. He tells the story in his memoirs:

[1] Germany and the Next War, translation, p. 53.

[2] Speech of February 6, 1888.

Our further coöperation with Austria was imperiled, in the first place, by energetic pressure of military influences on the king, to persuade him to cross the Jutland frontier without Austria. My old friend Field Marshal Wrangel telegraphed to the king, and not in cipher, the grossest insults against me. In one of these telegrams there was a passage, obviously referring to me, about diplomatists who belonged on the gallows.[1]

More important and more typical was a difference of opinion between Bismarck and Moltke in 1866. In the four months preceding the war against Austria, Bismarck conducted what, for our present purposes, is perhaps the most instructive of all his *ante bellum* campaigns. Precisely because he was forcing war upon Austria, he was particularly anxious to avoid the appearance of aggression. Accordingly, at every stage in the dispute, he kept Prussia one move behind Austria in the matter of open military preparations. In the middle of March, Austria concentrated troops in Bohemia. In reply, Prussia placed its active army in a state of readiness for war. In the course of April, several of the smaller German states began to make military preparations. On April 8, a treaty of alliance was concluded between Prussia and Italy, and Italy began to mobilize. Austria then mobilized in the south against Italy; and, in the last days of April, it ordered a general mobilization. During this month, Austria twice offered to stay its military preparations if Prussia would do the same; but it demanded free hand against Italy, and Prussia refused to leave its ally in the lurch. During the first half of May, Prussia mobilized its reserves and concentrated troops on the Saxon frontier and in Silesia. Then it waited. At this point, Moltke lost patience. He wished an immediate commencement of military operations, because, with every day's delay, the imperfectly equipped and only partially concentrated hostile forces were growing stronger.[2] King William, however, supported Bismarck, and the Prussian troops were held in leash for nearly a month after mobilization.

[1] Memoirs, p. 323; translation, vol. i, p. 379.

[2] Sybel, Begründung des deutschen Reichs, vol. iv, p. 421; translation, vol. iv, p. 471.

Then at last Bismarck got what he was waiting for—overt aggression on the part of Austria.[1]

These were not the only differences between Bismarck and the General Staff. Other conflicts are recorded, concerning the conduct of military operations and concerning terms of peace. When war has broken out, the leaders of the army resent, and not without reason, the intrusion of political considerations in the discussion of what are primarily military questions. Bismarck, however, insisted that "the determination and limitation of the objects which are to be attained by war . . . are and remain, during the war as before its outbreak, political problems; and the way in which these are solved cannot be without influence upon the conduct of the war."[2] As regards terms of peace, Bismarck came once at least into sharp conflict with the leaders of the Prussian army. In 1866, after the defeat of Austria, they wished to enter Vienna and to demand cession of Austrian territory as well as a large war indemnity. Believing that the common interests of Austria and Germany would eventually draw them together again, and desiring to avoid such resentment as needlessly humiliating terms of peace would leave rankling in Austrian minds, Bismarck successfully opposed these demands. In 1870–71, also, there seems to have been a difference of opinion between Bismarck and the military men regarding the annexation of French territory. Here again, Bismarck appreciated the dangers of lasting rancor on the part of the defeated nation; but how far and how strongly he opposed the military demands is uncertain. In any case, the reasons that he gave for the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine to Germany were purely strategic. This is, I think, the only instance in which he allowed his political instincts to be controlled by military considerations.

[1] As regards the manner in which a country should meet a menacing concentration of troops on its frontier, Bismarck expressed himself twenty years later in the same sense in which he acted in 1866. Concentration of troops, he said, was a matter concerning which explanations even were not to be demanded. "If one begins to ask for explanations, the reply may be somewhat ambiguous, and then the triplication will be quite free from ambiguity." Concentration of troops should be met by taking quietly the necessary military precautions. Speech of February 6, 1888.

[2] Memoirs, p. 445; translation, vol. ii, p. 106.

In all these conflicts, the military opponents of Bismarck showed failure to appreciate the imponderables. This, I think, is typical of the military mind. The business of the diplomatist is to persuade; that of the soldier is to crush. The diplomatist has to get under the skin of his adversary, not with lead or steel, but with imagination. And when it comes to divining the sentiments and prejudices of men of alien blood and speech, it is necessary to be well versed in their national history. For these and other studies essential to the diplomatist, the military officer has no sufficient leisure. With the increasing complexity of the instruments and methods of warfare, his professional training becomes more and more exacting of toil and of time.

When the question is of anticipating or averting a probable war, or of hastening or delaying an imminent war, the strategist, because he does not give due consideration to the imponderables, is unable justly to appreciate the political advantages of the defensive attitude. He is apt, rather, to ignore them entirely, because of his appreciation of the advantages of aggression. Earlier mobilization may mean initial victories; these encourage his soldiers and discourage the enemy's. Initial success, again, may well have more influence on the attitude of doubtful allies or wavering neutrals than any prejudice created by aggression. Desire to keep his country's attitude correct on the face of the record seems to him an idle scruple; to permit the enemy either to grow stronger or to strike first seems a crime. When Moltke heard of Bismarck's decision not to fight France in 1867, he said: "Bismarck's standpoint is unassailable; but it will one day cost us many human lives."[1] And the younger Moltke (German chief of staff at the outbreak of the present war) is reported to have said in 1913: "The commonplaces as to the responsibility of the aggressor must be disregarded. . . . We must forestall our principal ad-

[1] Memoirs of Moltke, *loc. cit.* In this instance Moltke's forecast seems not to have been verified. During the three years 1867–1870 the reorganization of the forces of the smaller German states on the Prussian model gave Germany a greater accession of strength than France secured by its military reforms and improved armament. That in 1867 any success comparable to that of 1870 could have been gained by Germany with smaller sacrifices is highly improbable. *Cf.* Bismarck, September 16, 1892, in Hofmann, vol. ii, p. 150.

versary as soon as there are nine chances in ten that we are going to have war."[1]

Bismarck's reflections on the relation of military aspirations to state policy are presented in many parts of his memoirs. I quote one passage:

> It is natural that, in the General Staff of the army, not only younger officers of ambition but also strategists of experience should feel the desire to turn to account and to make clear on the pages of history the efficiency of the troops they lead and their own capacity for leadership. It would be regrettable if the warlike spirit did not thus permeate the army. The duty of keeping the effects of this spirit within the limits which the need of the people for peace may justly demand, rests upon the political and not upon the military heads of the state. That the General Staff and its chiefs . . . have occasionally permitted themselves to be misled into imperiling peace lies in the necessary spirit of the institution—a spirit which I should not desire to see disappear. It becomes dangerous only under a monarch whose policy lacks sense of proportion and capacity of resisting one-sided and constitutionally unjustifiable influences.[2]

Throughout the reign of William I, as Bismarck here implies, diplomacy had a fair hearing whenever military considerations threatened to thwart the attainment of its ends. That the case for diplomacy was always effectively presented goes without saying; but it should be remembered that even a statesman of Bismarck's personal force and power of persuasion would have been seriously handicapped in such conflicts if he had not been able to speak with the authority of an independent and responsible minister. He had this authority because William I did not conceive that a monarch should personally direct either domestic government or diplomacy.

William II seems to have taken from the outset a different view of monarchic duty. Even before Bismarck's retirement from office, the old prince had prophesied that the young emperor would some day be his own chancellor. In fact, William

[1] Report of Jules Cambon, French ambassador in Berlin, May 6, 1913. French Yellow Book, no. 3.

[2] Memoirs, p. 442; translation, vol. ii, p. 103.

II appears to have taken into his own hands, among other matters, the supreme direction of Germany's foreign relations. It is therefore hardly an exaggeration to say that, in conflicts between military strategy and diplomacy, not only the decision but also the effective representation of the diplomatic view has devolved upon the emperor. His chancellors have been vice-chancellors; his secretaries of state for foreign affairs have been under-secretaries. When the chancellorship was held by men of such intelligence and force as Hohenlohe and Bülow, they were doubtless able to exercise no little influence. During the chancellorship of Caprivi and that of Bethmann-Hollweg, the imperial initiative seems to have been subjected to less restraint. Direct monarchic government, however, inevitably tends to draw into ministerial office men of the Caprivi type rather than men of the Hohenlohe type. Not only are they easier to get, but it is easier to keep them. When, in connection with the first of the "chancellor crises" after Bismarck's retirement, the German press commented on the scarcity of suitable candidates, Bismarck said: "To find persons who, by virtue of their talents as well as their character, seem indicated for the position of imperial chancellor, but who represent no convictions of their own, is of course no easy matter." [1]

VI

That in 1914 the Austrian and German governments succumbed to the peril which Bismarck always successfully resisted, that they sacrificed the moral and political advantages of the defensive position to the strategic advantages of the prompt attack, is clear on the face of the record. The rapidity with which they acted is in itself conclusive. If they desired to avert a European war, the space of eight days (July 23–31) was obviously insufficient to obtain an adjustment of the differences between Austria and Russia; and it proved insufficient even to reach an agreement on any method by which these differences might be adjusted. If, on the other hand, Austria and Germany desired to promote a European war, they could not

[1] March 14, 1893, in Hofmann, vol. ii, p. 217.

hope within so short a time to force Russia against its will to any overt act of hostility.

According to the military plan of the central empires, Austria was to crush Servia before Russia could effectively intervene. If Russia could be restrained from intervention,[1] well and good. Austria's position in the Balkan peninsula would be strengthened, and its prestige [2] would be enhanced. If, however, Russia should intervene, France of course would support Russia; and in that case Germany was to cripple France before the slow-moving Russian masses could seriously threaten Austria-Hungary or

[1] That Austria and Germany expected to succeed in localizing the Austro-Servian war seems improbable. The fact that their diplomatists steadily asserted such an expectation is quite explicable; they were steadily maintaining that Russia had no reason to interfere, and they could not well say that they expected Russia to act unreasonably. If, indeed, Great Britain had aided the central empires in their effort to restrain Russia, as the German Foreign Office urged it to do (British Blue Book, nos. 11, 46), and as the German chancellor (speech in the German Parliament, December 2, 1914) still asserts that it should have done, it is at least possible (although not, as he affirms, certain) that Austria would have been permitted to chastise Servia without Russian interference. That Germany expected Great Britain to follow any such course—to cut loose from the Triple Entente and to support the policy of the central empires—is, however, hardly credible. And it must not be forgotten that Russia warned Austria and Germany, on July 24 and later, that it could not remain indifferent to the fate of Servia (German White Paper, annex 4; Russian Orange Paper, no. 10). On the other hand, British and Italian diplomatists were of the opinion that Germany and Austria did not think Russia in earnest (British Blue Book, nos. 71, 80; French Yellow Book, nos. 50, 96), at least not until July 29 (British Blue Book, no. 94). And, according to the Russian minister of foreign affairs, the German ambassador at St. Petersburg assured his government that Russia would not go to war (British Blue Book, no. 139), and "completely broke down" on learning that war was inevitable (*ibid.*, no. 97).

[2] It is an interesting and possibly significant fact that the one European power whose "prestige" seems to have been in question was Austria. In the entire diplomatic correspondence published by the different governments we find the word used only in reference to this power. It was employed to explain the Austrian attitude, not only by Italian, French and Russian diplomatists (British Blue Book, nos. 38, 76, and Russian Orange Paper, no. 14), but by the Austrian minister of foreign affairs himself, who told the British ambassador at Vienna, July 28, that the "prestige of the Dual Monarchy was engaged, and nothing could now prevent conflict" with Servia (British Blue Book, no. 61). Without using the word "prestige," the German Foreign Office indicated the existence at Vienna of a degree of touchiness closely related to the soldier's and duelist's sense of honor: Germany hesitated to urge Austria to moderation, because "any idea that they were being pressed would be likely to cause them to precipitate matters." British Blue Book, nos. 76, 107, and Russian Orange Paper, no. 51.

Germany. This plan, which was not first formed in 1914,[1] was revealed in all its essential details at the outbreak of the war. In the published diplomatic correspondence we can see how it controlled all the negotiations and thwarted every effort of German diplomacy to maintain even the semblance of a pacific attitude.[2]

Of the relations between diplomatic and military plans and efforts at Vienna we know practically nothing.[3] Of the situation in Berlin, however, we know a good deal. There is evidence that the German Foreign Office, if left to its own devices, would have tried to play the diplomatic game on Bismarckian lines, keeping one move behind the adversary in military preparation. On July 27, the German secretary of state for foreign affairs, von Jagow, told the French ambassador, Jules Cambon, that "if Russia mobilized, Germany would be obliged to mobilize as well." In reply to Cambon's question, "if Germany would believe herself bound to mobilize in the event of Russia mobilizing only on her Austrian frontier," von Jagow replied in the negative. He added that "if Russia attacked Austria, Germany would have to attack at once on her side. The proposed British intervention in St. Petersburg and Vienna could therefore . . . become effective only if events were not precipitated."[4] Events, however, were precipitated. On July 30, on the basis of information received from one of the other ambassadors in Berlin, Cambon reported to Paris:

[1] *Cf.* dispatch of the French ambassador in Berlin, May 6, 1913; French Yellow Book, no. 3.

[2] That other governments besides those of Germany and of Austria were influenced by strategic considerations is indubitable. This is particularly clear in the case of Russia; *cf.* Russian Orange Paper, no. 48; French Yellow Book, nos. 103, 118; British Blue Book, nos. 44, 70, 97, 113. Neither Russia nor its allies, however, allowed military considerations so to control their policy as to lose the moral and political advantages of the defensive position.

[3] We hear something, however, of divergent desires. A French consular report asserted, July 20, that the Austrian minister of foreign affairs and the diplomatiss wished "at most a localized operation against Servia," while a militarygroup ac-t cepted "the idea of a conflict on a general scale—in other words, a conflagration." French Yellow Book, no. 14.

[4] French Yellow Book, no. 67. Von Jagow made the same statements to the British ambassador in Berlin; *cf.* British Blue Book, no. 43.

According to the under secretary of state, the military authorities are urging strongly that mobilization should be decreed, on the ground that any delay will lose Germany some of her advantages. Up to the present, however, it has been possible to resist successfully the haste of the General Staff, which in mobilization sees war.[1]

Later in the same day, Cambon had a conversation with von Jagow, in which the latter expressed his fear that

Austria might mobilize completely in consequence of the partial Russian mobilization, which might bring about the answering blow of total Russian mobilization and, in consequence, that of Germany. I pointed out . . . that he himself had said to me that Germany would not consider herself forced to mobilize unless Russia mobilized upon the German frontier, and that such was not the case. He replied that that was true, but that the heads of the army insisted that all delay was a loss of strength to the German army.[2]

Two days later, August 1, von Jagow had to tell the British ambassador, Sir Edward Goschen, that Germany had answered Russian mobilization, not with German mobilization, but with an ultimatum demanding that Russia demobilize, and, having received no answer, was about to declare war. For this decision he had, of course, none but a strategic explanation:

Russia had said that her mobilization did not necessarily imply war, and that she could perfectly well remain mobilized for months without making war. This was not the case with Germany. She had the speed and Russia had the numbers, and the safety of the German Empire forbade that Germany should allow Russia time to bring up masses of troops from all parts of her wide dominions.[3]

On July 31, when the German government decided to demand Russian demobilization, the German Foreign Office finally abandoned the attempt to conduct negotiations on the traditional diplomatic lines. On that day the British ambassador, acting on instructions from London,[4] asked von Jagow whether Germany would respect the neutrality of Belgium. The latter replied, according to Goschen's report, that

[1] French Yellow Book, no. 105.
[2] *Ibid.*, no. 109.
[3] British Blue Book, no. 138.
[4] *Ibid.*, no. 114.

he must consult the emperor and the chancellor before he could possibly answer. I gathered from what he said that he thought any reply they might give could not but disclose a certain amount of their plan of campaign in the event of war ensuing, and he was therefore very doubtful whether they would return any answer at all.[1]

In fact no answer was given until three days later, on August 4, when the German troops had already crossed the Belgian frontier. Then von Jagow again had to explain Germany's action; and again he could defend it only on strategic grounds:

They had to advance into France by the quickest and easiest way, so as to be able to get well ahead with their operations and endeavor to strike some decisive blow as early as possible. It was a matter of life and death for them, as, if they had gone by the more southern route, they could not have hoped . . . to have got through without formidable opposition entailing great loss of time. This loss of time would have meant time gained by the Russians for bringing up their troops to the German frontier. Rapidity of action was the great German asset, while that of Russia was an inexhaustible supply of troops.[2]

The conduct of Austro-German diplomacy during the critical period, July 23–31, is open to censure alike from the strategist and from the diplomatist. If for strategic reasons the "commonplaces as to the responsibility of the aggressor" were to be disregarded, why was an ultimatum not sent to Russia earlier? Why not demand, as soon as Austria had declared war on Servia, that Russia pledge itself to keep the peace? On the other hand, if the diplomatic game was to be played at all, why not play it out? The least defensible of policies is a vacillating policy.

In the present state of our information it is as difficult to say why conversations between Vienna and St. Petersburg were opened on the 30th of July as to explain why they were cut off at midnight on the 31st. The only theory that seems at all plausible is that of the French ambassador in Berlin. Writing on July 29, he reported that the German chancellor had promised

[1] British Blue Book, no. 122. *Cf.* French Yellow Book, no. 123.

[2] British Blue Book, no. 160, at page 78.

to urge upon Vienna direct negotiations with St. Petersburg, and he added:

> The chancellor's attitude is very probably the result of the last interview of Sir Edward Grey with Prince Lichnowsky [German ambassador in London]. Up to these very last few days people have flattered themselves here that England would remain aloof, and the impression produced by her attitude upon the German government and upon financiers and business men is profound.[1]

Doubt as to Great Britain's attitude might well induce the German General Staff itself to think twice before forcing war upon Russia. Whether Germany hoped to gain its "place in the sun" by peaceful arrangements with Great Britain, or expected to develop its world power on the ruins of the British Empire, it is inconceivable that it intended to fight Great Britain at the same time that it was fighting Russia and France. And until July 29 the German government seems to have been confident that Great Britain would remain neutral. On what grounds was this confidence based?

When we read the official and unofficial explanations of Great Britain's intervention which have been advanced on the part of Germany since the outbreak of the war, and which aim to show that Great Britain had quite other reasons for intervening than Germany's breach of Belgian neutrality, our perplexity increases. When, for example, we are reminded that for centuries it has been Great Britain's policy to promote and support continental coalitions against any continental state which threatened to obtain a dominating position, especially if such a state was developing sea power, we wonder why this fact was not taken into account by the German government before the outbreak of the present war. And when we are told that to Great Britain itself —to take the German chancellor's most recent explanation of his famous phrase—the treaty of 1839 was only "a scrap of paper," we wonder why, in a country justly renowned for its painstaking historical research, it should be forgotten that the

[1] French Yellow Book, no. 92. The same explanation of the German change of attitude was given by the Italian minister for foreign affairs, July 30; *cf.* British Blue Book, no. 106.

neutralizing of Belgium in 1839, like the creation of the kingdom of the Netherlands in 1815, was chiefly promoted by Great Britain, for the quite intelligible purpose of preventing this part of the European coast line from being used as a base for military operations against its own territory.

Some of the arguments which Germany addressed to Great Britain in order to dissuade that power from intervening to protect France or Belgium are quite similar to those which Austria and Germany addressed to Russia, in order to show that Russia had no reason to intervene for the protection of Servia. Austria assured Russia that, if the war were localized, it would undertake to respect the integrity and to guarantee the continuance of the Servian state.[1] In a conversation with the British ambassador on July 29, the German chancellor, after stating that it was clear to him "that Great Britain would never stand by and allow France to be crushed," proceeded to reassure the ambassador:

> That, however, was not the object at which Germany aimed. Provided that the neutrality of Great Britain were certain, every assurance would be given to the British government that the Imperial government aimed at no territorial acquisition at the expense of France should they prove victorious in any war that might ensue.[2]

In the same conversation, the German chancellor said that if, in consequence of the action of France, Germany should be forced to enter upon operations in Belgium, "Belgian integrity would be respected if she had not sided against Germany." In each case there appears to have been an assumption that such an undertaking would be satisfactory; that any result of war short of annexation would be unobjectionable. The Russian objection to the crushing of Servia, however, and the British objection to the crushing of France rested chiefly on the effect upon the balance of power in the Balkans and in Europe. From the political point of view, it is not by annexation alone that the

[1] German White Paper, Memorandum, annexes 3, 10, 10 A, 10 B; Russian Orange Paper, nos. 28, 35, 60; British Blue Book, nos. 47, 48, 59; French Yellow Book, no. 62.

[2] British Blue Book, no. 85.

balance of power is affected. If, as a result of war, Servia became politically dependent on Austria, or France were seriously weakened, the balance of power would be disturbed. The difference would be one of degree only. Similarly as regards Belgium: if that country were used as a base of military operations against France, a precedent would be created for using it, in a future war, as a base of operations against England. This peril might be greater if Belgium were annexed by Germany, but it would not be obviated by the reëstablishment of Belgium as a nominally independent and neutralized state. Here again the difference would be in degree only. To the military man, on the other hand, the balance of power appears to be seriously disturbed only by annexation, because only in such event can the victorious state build fortresses and levy troops in the conquered territory. I do not mean to imply that military men do not recognize that the balance of power is affected when a country is weakened by a crushing defeat and loaded with a heavy war indemnity, or when it has become politically dependent upon the conquering power; but the difference between these results and outright annexation seems to them, I think, one of kind rather than one of degree. If the Austrian and German governments seriously expected these proffered pledges to influence the action of Russia or of Great Britain, the point of view which they took, and apparently assumed that Russia and Great Britain would also take, was, I suggest, military rather than political.

By July 29, however, if not earlier, the Austrian and German governments had apparently become convinced not only that Russia would probably intervene but that Great Britain also might intervene.[1] Why then did Germany precipitate the continental war by its ultimatum to Russia and give Great Britain formal cause for war by the invasion of Belgium? Partly, beyond a doubt, because the greater the number of hostile powers, the more necessary it seemed to realize to the full the advantages of superior military preparation; partly, also, and perhaps

[1] For British warnings, which became increasingly grave in tone, *cf.* British Blue Book, Introductory Narrative and nos. 48, 89, 101, 102, 109, 111, 123.

mainly, because all along Austria and Germany had counted, in the case of Russia, on internal dissensions and possible foreign complications[1] and, in the case of Great Britain, on the imminence of civil war in Ireland[2] and the possibility of revolts in India, in Egypt and in South Africa. If these difficulties and dangers did not deter Russia or Great Britain from war, they would at least make it difficult for either of them to wage war efficiently. In case of Great Britain, the German government apparently hoped to the last that peril of sedition would prove deterrent. They could not have believed that Great Britain would not like to fight, but they persuaded themselves that it would be unable to fight.[3] They reached this conclusion, however, only by ignoring the fact, familiar to every student of history, that foreign war usually allays and often ends internal dissensions. Today, not only is this point appreciated in Germany, but we are told that Great Britain went to war in order to shelve the Irish question!

Upon the question whether the German government expected to use Belgium as a military highway into France without encountering Belgian resistance, or anticipated and possibly desired resistance, I shall not venture to express an opinion. It is obvious that Belgian resistance has enabled the invaders to use not only the territory but all the resources of this country in the prosecution of the war and has opened the way for its

[1] British Blue Book, nos. 32, 71; French Yellow Book, no. 35.

[2] French Yellow Book, no. 35. It will be remembered that there was armed conflict, accompanied by loss of life, in Dublin, July 26.

[3] The question whether, as has been repeatedly urged, Great Britain could have prevented the war by placing itself from the outset unequivocally on the side of Russia and France lies outside the scope of this paper. To ask this question is to concede that the attitude of Austria and Germany was aggressive. The question raised is whether their aggression could have been checked by a British threat of war. The British government gave its reasons for not pursuing such a course during the negotiations (British Blue Book, nos. 6, 17, 24, 44, 59), and it has since more fully developed its argument on this point (speech of Sir Edward Grey in the House of Commons, August 3; *ibid.*, at pp. 89–91). It may, however, be suggested that if, as is here maintained, the German expectation of British neutrality was based, not on any doubt as to Great Britain's inclination to intervene, but on the belief that Great Britain could not intervene, or at least could not intervene effectively, it is difficult to see why Germany should have attached any more weight to a threat than it actually attached to repeated warnings.

annexation in case of final German victory; but to infer that, in view of these immediate and prospective advantages, the German government not only reckoned with but hoped for resistance, would be to attribute to that government intentions which it has not avowed and with which it should not be charged without direct evidence. If, however, Germany expected to go through Belgium without fighting the Belgians, this expectation must have rested upon the purely military consideration that resistance on the part of the Belgian militia was so hopeless as to be inconceivable. From the purely military point of view, even the Belgian General Staff could hardly have reached a different conclusion. It is of course evident that in permitting the passage of German troops Belgium would have ceased to be neutral and would have given France and Great Britain cause for war; but it would have had German support against these countries, with a German guaranty of its territorial integrity at the close of the war. And in case of German defeat, France and Great Britain might well have recognized the excuse of duress, *vis major*. The sentiments that seem to have determined Belgian resistance to Germany—love of independence, fidelity to treaty engagements and resentment against flagrant wrong—are of precisely the sort which the military mind is apt to undervalue. They are imponderables.

This study of the Austro-German diplomacy seems to lead to fairly definite conclusions. Military, not political, opinion decided that war was, if not desirable, at least inevitable; military strategy robbed diplomacy, not only of the time necessary to manœuver the adversaries into aggression, but even of opportunity to show a decent reluctance to engage in war; military strategy decided that the war must be carried at the outset through Belgium into France, leaving to diplomacy only the hopeless task of getting the German armies through Belgium into France without war with Great Britain. There are signs already that in the event of German defeat the diplomatists are to be made the scapegoats. That, however, will be unjust; for they really had no chance.

In assuming the control of diplomacy, military strategy appears to have defeated its own aims. Whatever may be the

final outcome of the war, the original plan of campaign has failed. Neither Servia nor France has been crushed. And the original plan of campaign in the west seems to have failed because of the unexpectedly obstinate resistance of the Belgians and the unexpectedly efficient assistance which Great Britain was able to give to France. The most formidable fighting machine in the world has been unable to perform the task imposed upon it by its leaders; and the error in their calculations was undervaluation of the imponderables.

VII

From the outbreak of the war there has been, not only in countries opposed to Austria and Germany, but also in neutral countries, and particularly in the United States, a very general assertion that "militarism" is responsible. There has been also a general assumption that German or Prussian militarism is a unique phenomenon; that it differs from anything resembling militarism to be found in other countries, not in degree only, but in kind.

What do we really mean when we assert that a state is militaristic? It is clear, I think, that a state is not necessarily militaristic because it is prepared for war. It is not necessarily militaristic because it holds all its able-bodied male citizens to military service, as is the case in Switzerland, nor because it holds them to three years of training, as is the case in France, nor because it has a powerful navy, as is the case with the United States. Nor is a state militaristic because it has a large body of professional military officers whose duty it is to form plans for the conduct of war, and who are apt to regard war with other feelings than those of the normal civilian. A nation is militaristic just in so far as the views and feelings natural and almost necessary in its army and navy are shared by its civilians, especially by those who are able to direct national thought and to create national sentiment. In a nation, as in an individual, militarism is a state of mind. The more fully a national mind is militarized, the more difficult it becomes for the political heads of the state to subordinate military to political considerations. They may even fail to give due weight to purely political considerations,

because their own minds have been militarized. When this happens, the state itself has become militaristic.

The peril that foreign policy may be controlled by considerations of military strategy is of course greatest in such a state. It is, however, not confined to such a state. The characteristics of the military mind are everywhere the same, and the antithesis between the military mind and the political mind is not only perpetual but universal. Military appreciation of the advantages of the attack will always and everywhere tend to rob diplomacy of the time necessary to accomplish its proper tasks and may direct any government into unwise and possibly disastrous action. And if this peril is particularly great under personal government, it must be remembered that in monarchies and republics alike, under every system of government which obtains in the civilized world, the conduct of diplomacy is personal: it is in the hands of the chief executive and of the secretary or minister of foreign affairs. To show that Great Britain and the United States may be exposed to the same perils to which Austria and Germany succumbed in 1914, two illustrations must suffice.

When in 1912[1] the British military attaché in Brussels told the Belgian general with whom he was conferring that, in case of necessity, the British government would land troops in Belgium without waiting for any invitation from that country, he neither committed the Belgian government to any such arrangement, since the Belgian general protested that Belgian consent was necessary, nor did he commit his own government, because, fortunately, he had no power to do so. He gave, however, a typical illustration of the incapacity of the military man to appreciate the importance of keeping one's country in a correct attitude on the face of the record.[2]

Just before the outbreak of the Spanish-American war, the acting secretary of our navy urged President McKinley to send out a fleet to meet and destroy the Spanish fleet without waiting for a formal declaration of war.[3] Here we have a classical

[1] Or 1911. The date seems to be uncertain.

[2] The Case of Belgium, p. 12.

[3] John D. Long, The New American Navy, p. 174.

example of the danger that even the civilian, if charged with military responsibility and preoccupied with military problems, may leave out of his reckoning a very important imponderable —the opinion of civilized mankind.

I have spoken thus far only of the dangers which a nation incurs by permitting its diplomacy to be controlled by strategic considerations. There is, however, a far broader aspect to the problem. Of all means which civilization has provided to avert war, negotiation is the most important. Direct negotiation may be and often is supplemented by the friendly offices of nations not immediately concerned and by offers of mediation; but these are but extensions of negotiation. Arbitration is a potent agency for the peaceful settlement of controversies, but arbitration cannot be set in motion without negotiation. For negotiation time is essential. In the interest of the peace of the world, therefore, it is of the highest importance that the political heads of every state should be ever on their guard against the attempts of their military advisers to convince them that immediate attack is necessary. It is almost always declared to be a matter "of life or death." To the nation primarily concerned it is usually, in fact, only a matter of greater or less chance of initial success. To peace, however, it is always a matter of death.

MUNROE SMITH.

Addendum.—The Austro-Hungarian Red Book (not accessible until the preceding pages had gone to press) gives many corroborative and some illuminating data.—In a dispatch (no. 6) from the Austrian minister at Belgrade, July 21, we have further evidence that Austrian "prestige" was at stake (*supra*, p. 70, note 2).—On July 31, the Austrian ambassador at St. Petersburg reported (no. 55) that his conversations with the Russian foreign minister had not brought them "noticeably closer to an understanding." If the Russian, French and British accounts of those conversations (*supra*, p. 56) are correct, the statement of the Austrian ambassador can mean only that on no condition would his government stay its military action against Servia, and that, so far as Austria was concerned, these negotiations were purely dilatory.—To the story of the overriding of diplomacy by military strategy at Berlin (*supra*, pp. 71, 72) is now to be added the fact of pressure from Vienna. On July 28, the Austrian foreign minister instructed the Austrian Ambassador at Berlin to urge Germany to notify Russia that mobilization on its part would be answered "with the most extensive military counter-measures" (no. 42).—To Austro-German grounds for hoping that the war against Servia might be "localized" (*supra*, p. 70, note 1) should be added, it appears, a hope that Russia might be deterred by German threats; for, in the note just cited, the Austrian foreign minister expressed his belief that "plain language would be the most efficacious means" of restraining Russia.

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